



North Berwick

# **The Celtic Cross Catherine Watson Memorial**

**Anchor Green  
North Berwick**

North Berwick Environment and Heritage Trust  
Heritage Guide

## MONUMENT TO MISS CATHERINE WATSON AT NORTH BERWICK



“There has been erected at North Berwick a handsome granite cross to commemorate the noble act by which Miss Catherine Watson, of Glasgow, lost her life in rescuing a boy from drowning. The sad catastrophe took place, as will be remembered, last summer, and this cross, which has been erected by public subscription, is the result of a movement made shortly after the occurrence. The spot selected for the erection of the cross is situated near the beach, between the East and West Bays. The cross is purely Celtic in style. It has been wrought out of a single block of red Peterhead granite, and measures 14ft. long by 39in. at the arms. The front is very ornately carved with ornament of a strictly Celtic type, and even as the structure is all round, it shows the same elaborate and careful finish on the back and edges. Carved in raised letters, in a panel at the base of the cross, the following words are inscribed :- “Erected by

public subscription, in memory of Catherine Watson of Glasgow, aged 19, who was drowned in the East Bay, 27th July [1889], while rescuing a drowning boy; the child was saved; the brave girl was taken.” So as to give elevation to, and form a basement for, the cross, it is raised upon a large boulder which was brought up from the shore. Upon the front of the boulder will shortly be placed



a medallion of Miss Watson. It is being executed in bronze and is the gift of her fellow students in the Glasgow School of Arts. The whole structure is to be surrounded with a stone cope, surmounted by an elegant iron railing. The design for the whole was prepared by Stewart McGlashen & co. Edinburgh, and it was carried out at their works.' *Glasgow Herald*, 27th June 1890

*Medallion inscription:*

*'KATE WATSON A LOVING TRIBUTE FROM HER FELLOW STUDENTS OF GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART IN MEMORY OF ONE OF THEIR NUMBER'*

**NORTH BERWICK.—PROPOSED MEMORIAL TO CATHERINE WATSON.**—A movement is on foot to have a memorial cross erected to the memory of Miss Catherine Watson, who lost her life recently in the singularly heroic endeavour to save the lives of others. It is proposed that the memorial should take the form of a lofty Iona cross of granite, and be erected in a prominent position on a rock at the East Bay near the spot where the lamentable accident occurred. Sir Walter Hamilton Dalrymple, The Lodge, North Berwick, has given £5 to the fund, and subscriptions will be received and acknowledged by Sir Walter, or the Hon. R. Lyttiston, North Berwick, who has willingly agreed to act as treasurer of the fund. The object will doubtless receive the support it merits.

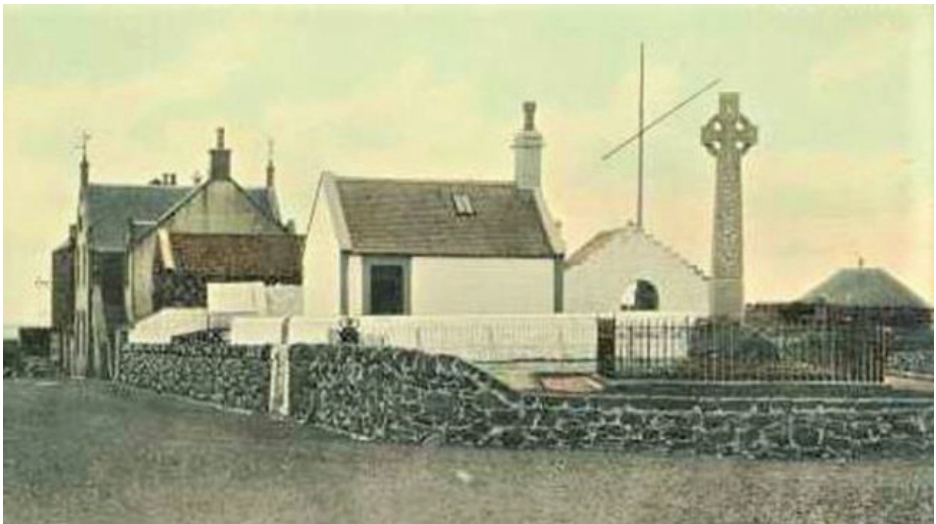
*Article from Glasgow Herald, 27th June 1890*

Stuart McGlashan was a Scottish monumental mason and sculptor. Although initially based in Glasgow, he moved to Edinburgh in 1846 and founded the firm of Stuart McGlashan, 1846–1974. He created a series of machines capable of carving intricate designs and doing so quickly.

Contemporary sculptors did not regard his work highly, regarding him a mason rather than a sculptor. Despite his work not being ‘hand carved’, its artistic value is extremely high.

His monuments frequently use red or pink granite, rather than the more usual grey, and are carved from a single block of granite. They are often of the form of a Celtic cross mounted on a base with a medallion. The Catherine Watson Memorial is a particularly fine example of this type.

McGlashan’s work was in high demand and it changed the face of cemetery design and the durability of monuments.



*Postcard showing Anchor Green and the ‘elegant iron railing’*